

AMENDMENTS TO THE DRAWINGS:

The attached replacement drawing sheet including Figs. 1 and 2 should replace the originally filed drawing sheet including Figs. 1 and 2. Fig. 1 is amended to include a --Prior Art-- label.

The attached replacement drawing sheet including Fig. 3 should replace the originally filed drawing sheet including Fig. 3. Fig. 3 is amended to include a --Prior Art-- label.

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration of this application is respectfully requested in view of the previous amendments and the following remarks.

The Examiner observes in the middle of page 2 of the Official Action that the specification refers to Fig. 10 as illustrating a four-cavity surface, while Fig. 10 only illustrates three cavities. Applicants respectfully submit that an ordinarily skilled artisan would understand that Fig. 10 does illustrate a four-cavity surface, with the broken lines in the middle of Fig. 10 denoting a portion of the surface not actually shown so that the figure can be shortened for clarity purposes. Withdrawal of the grounds for rejecting to the specification is therefore respectfully requested.

The amendments to the specification, claims and drawings address the remaining issues raised on pages 2 and 3 of the Official Action. Withdrawal of the objections to the specification, claims and drawings is therefore respectfully requested.

Independent Claim 1 is rejected based on the disclosure in DE19953576, hereinafter Elsaesser.

Amended Claim 1 is clearly distinguishable over the disclosure in Elsaesser. For example, amended Claim 1 recites that at least one of the length and width dimension of the surface area of is larger than 100 μm . In Elsaesser, the maximum dimension is 100 μm . Accordingly, Elsaesser does not disclose at least one of the length and width dimension being larger than 100 μm as recited in amended Claim 1.

Additionally, the subject matter of Claims 4 and 7, which were not rejected based on the disclosure in Elsaesser, have been incorporated into Claim 1.

For at least these reasons, Claim 1 is allowable over Elsaesser, and withdrawal of the rejection of Claim 1 based on the disclosure in Elsaesser is respectfully requested.

Independent Claim 1 is also rejected based on the disclosure in U.S. Patent No. 6,802,650, hereinafter Yasuda.

Amended Claim 1 is clearly distinguishable over the disclosure in Yasuda. For example, amended Claim 1 recites that at least one of the length and width dimension of the surface area of is larger than 100 μm . In Yasuda, the maximum dimension is 100 μm . Accordingly, Yasuda does not disclose at least one of the length and width dimension being larger than 100 μm as recited in amended Claim 1.

Additionally, the subject matter of Claim 4 has been incorporated into Claim 1, so that Claim 1 now recites that the cavity has a depth which is larger than 10 times the lubricant film thickness. While the Official Action states that lines 57-59 of column 3 of Yasuda discloses the subject matter of Claim 4, that portion of Yasuda actually discloses that a peripheral portion 3B has a height H2 smaller than a thickness of the lubricating film, and preferably 0.5 μm or less. That portion of Yasuda does not disclose a cavity having a depth which is larger than 10 times the lubricant film thickness as recited in amended Claim 1.

For at least these reasons, Claim 1 is allowable over Yasuda, and withdrawal of the rejection of Claim 1 based on the disclosure in Yasuda is respectfully requested.

Independent Claim 1 is also rejected based on the disclosure in U.S. Patent No. 2,631,905, hereinafter Coppen.

Amended Claim 1 is clearly distinguishable over the disclosure in Coppen. For example, the subject matter of Claim 7 has been incorporated into Claim 1, so that Claim 1 now recites that the sum of the surface areas of all cavities of one and the same bearing surface amounts to at least 15% of the contact area of the bearing surfaces. While the Official Action states that Figs. 1-4 and 8 disclose this feature, Applicants respectfully submit that Figs. 1-4 and 8 of Coppen do not illustrate that the sum of the surface areas of all cavities of one and the same bearing surface amounts to at least 15% of the contact area of the bearing surfaces. Should the grounds for rejection be maintained, it is respectfully requested that a detailed explanation be provided.

For at least these reasons, Claim 1 is allowable over Coppen, and withdrawal of the rejection of Claim 1 based on the disclosure in Coppen is respectfully requested.

The dependent claims are allowable at least by virtue of their dependence from allowable independent claims. Thus, a detailed discussion of the additional distinguishing features recited in the dependent claims is not set forth at this time.

Early and favorable action with respect to this application is respectfully requested.

Should any questions arise in connection with this application or should the Examiner believe that a telephone conference with the undersigned would be helpful

in resolving any remaining issues pertaining to this application, the undersigned respectfully requests that he be contacted at the number indicated below.

Respectfully submitted,

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